



BMW 2-Series Active Tourer

Action is reaction

Review | At first, BMW merely focussed on sporty models. Then, the customer demanded a spacious family car. BMW responded with the X5. Spacious indeed, but an off-roader and not a family car. So, BMW introduced the GT. Again, spacious, but more of a limousine than a family car. Now BMW introduces the "2-Series Active Tourer". Finally a true family car by BMW?

Up to now BMW hasn't built a proper family car because of its image. Family cars are not sporty, cool or attractive and thus don't match the image BMW tries to convey. That's why the new 2-Series is named "Active Tourer". This name is supposed to be associated with a sporty, adventurous and exciting lifestyle.

And when it comes to its looks, BMW did everything it could to hide the fact that the "Active Tourer" is in fact a spacious box. The tall shoulder line and the self-assured look from the headlights provide the 2-Series with a tough look. Rest assured, the Active Tourer isn't exactly photogenic; the car looks much better in real life than in any picture.



Space

Because of its looks, an outsider doesn't have the faintest clue how spacious the Active Tourer really is. And it is huge! The seating position is higher than in a BMW X1. The space in the front is enough to develop a spontaneous case of agoraphobia. The headroom in particular is huge. At the same time the dashboard has been built around the driver and passenger, to

give them a true BMW experience.

Compared to other BMWs, the driver and passenger sit upright while the occupants of other models almost lay down. There's a good reason for this: by utilising the height of the car, more space remains in the back. And indeed, the room in the back is exceptional as well. When asked how the rear space in the Active Tourer compares to a 5-Series or 7-Series, the official spokespeople from BMW were unusually quiet. That alone says it all!



The 2-Series Active Tourer is in fact as spacious as a fair sized MPV (a word the same BMW staff will never use in the same sentence with the Active Tourer). The big difference is in the decoration. While the average MPV is like a nursery on wheels, the Active Tourer is as luxurious and business oriented as any other BMW.

And... BMW takes everything one step further. For example the back seat can be folded in three (!) separate pieces. The back seat is mounted on a rail, so the driver can choose between more legroom or more luggage space. Optionally, the boot lid can be operated automatically. Just slide a foot under the rear bumper and the boot lid will open as if by magic!



Trim levels

When it comes to standard equipment the Active Tourer is also a true "premium" product. This 2-Series can be fitted with "iDrive": BMW's excellent audio, communications and navigation system. Like no other, it manages to combine powerful features with ease of use.

New for the 2-Series is a simple version of "head-up display". It projects essential information on a glass panel, mounted right in the eyeline of the driver. This version is both cheaper and easier to read than a head-up display that projects information on the windscreen.



Driving

The generous cabin space is owed to an unusual layout; unusual for BMW that is. While the rest of the world chooses front-wheel drive, BMW prefers rear-wheel drive. Rear-wheel drive makes for better handling, but requires an engine that's mounted in the length of the car (rather than the width), a drive shaft from the front to the back of the car and a differential underneath the boot.

To create more space, this BMW opted for front-wheel drive. Just in the front this freed up more than 30 cm!



The difference in handling with other BMWs is small, but certainly noticeable. The 2-Series Active Tourer lacks the pure, superior feeling in the steering that's typical for BMW. Those driving an Active Tourer won't get that smug face other BMW drivers do.

Also, this family car is tuned for comfort rather than handling. Yet, the 2-Series handles much better than family saloons from other brands. Even without trying, the 2-Series outperforms ordinary family cars on twisty roads.

Engines

When it comes to the engines, the 2-Series Active Tourer is also a real family car. Don't expect any outrageous six-cylinders or excessive power houses. The base model boasts a modest 1.5 litre engine with just three cylinders for optimal fuel economy.



Regrettably, the three-cylinder engine wasn't available when test driving, so a more traditional "225iA" was chosen. This is a 2.0 litre four-cylinder turbo engine which develops 231 PS / 350 Nm. Depending on the choice of the driver this turns the 2-Series either into an exciting performance car or a comfortable, frugal cruiser.

Using the "eco pro" mode, emphasis is on fuel economy. The "225i" is best suited to slowly go with the flow of traffic, without a hint of the power lurking underneath the bonnet. The eight-speed automatic transmission does its utmost to keep the engine speed so low that the occupants hardly notice the engine is running at all. As soon as the throttle is released, the automatic gearbox selects "neutral". By "coasting" as much as possible, energy is being preserved.



When sports-mode is engaged and the pedal is

pushed to the metal, the 2-Series rockets towards the horizon like a true BMW. The automatic gearbox now shifts down and makes the best of each and every horsepower at its disposal. This means the sprint from 0 to 62 mph is cleared in just 6.6 seconds, while the maximum speed is 240 km/h (150 mpg).

Yet, the less powerful "218d" diesel combined with a manual gearbox is more fun to drive. This 150 PS / 330 Nm strong four-cylinder delivers its maximum punch at low revs and thereby almost dares the driver to go faster still. Just like the petrol engine, the diesel is quiet and refined. In that respect the 2-Series Active Tourer is also a true BMW.



of its front-wheel drive architecture the 2-Series Active Tourer doesn't handle like the average BMW. On the other hand: handling is much better than average. Thanks to the innovative technology and high build quality the 2-Series Active Tourer also delivers the premium feel that distinguishes a BMW from an ordinary car. ■

Conclusion

After many years of finding excuses and dawdling about, it finally happened: BMW introduces a true family hatchback! At the same time BMW introduces its first front-wheel drive in a long time, which also feels like the carmaker lost its religion.

Yet, the 2-Series Active Tourer is a logical choice. First of all, this is the car customers have asked for for many years. The Active Tourer is spacious, functional and - compared to other BMWs - cheap to buy and run.

At the same time, the carmaker did everything it could to turn this family car into a real BMW. Because



Specifications

BMW 2-Series Active Tourer 220i M Sport

Size and weight



Length x width x height	434 x 180 x 156 cm
Wheelbase	267 cm
Kerb weight	1.475 kg
Trailer	730 kg
Trailer - braked	1.500 kg
Fuel capacity	51 l
Luggage space	468/1510 l
Tyre size	205/60/R16

Engine and performance



Capacity	1998 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/4
Max power	192 PS @ 4700 rpm
Max torque	280 Nm @ 1250 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	7.5 secs
Top speed	230 km/h
Average mileage	47.8 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	INF l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	INF l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	137 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 27,190
Price base model	Â£ 22,125